

NOTES AND THOUGHTS CONCERNING INTERACTIONS WITH COUNCILMAN RON BOWEN

- Met with Councilman Bowen and Roger Orr on November 15, 2012 to discuss a list of topics that Councilman Bowen had identified. Councilman Bowen became very agitated about code enforcement, discussing the issues he had over the campaign. He brought up the administrative form he had drafted during the campaign, to replace the form previously promulgated by the Building Department, which Roger allowed him to implement.
- On November 19, 2012, the newly elected City Councilmembers, including Mr. Bowen, were sworn in.
- On November 19, 2012, 8:33 p.m., I sent an e-mail to staff checking in to see if Mr. Bowen's e-mail account was set up. Please see the attachments.
- On November 20, 2012, I learned Councilman Bowen was upset with the pace of his integration into the organization. His cards were not ready. Office was not ready due to former Councilman Kelly's delayed departure. [Editorial Note: In fairness to Councilman Bowen and after enjoying the Web Conference "Building Council Relationships that Get Things Done" on November 15, 2012, I can say that I understand his displeasure. We should have rolled out the red carpet better. I have to own that.]
- On November 21, 2012, Mr. Bowen's disappointment and displeasure seemed to bubble over and there was a reported verbal confrontation between Mr. Bowen and Bonnie Cruz, City Council Office Manager, that left Mrs. B. Cruz in tears. I spent a couple of hours in the Council Office that day, listening to Mrs. B. Cruz, the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Councilwoman Berger and Councilwoman Martin discuss this matter and their feelings about it. In addition to the description of the call, itself, which was reported by Mrs. B. Cruz and Councilwoman Berger as loud yelling that forced Mrs. B. Cruz to hold the phone away from her ear and was audible to Councilwoman Berger at a distance, the group discussed Councilman Bowen's complaints concerning the presence of children in the City Council Office. I reviewed this matter with Mrs. Cruz and expressed that I was sorry what happened, she did not have to be abused by any customer, even a Councilmember, could refer such customers to me and/or Mrs. Verillo and that we should try to address the legitimate substance of Councilman Bowen's complaint.
- On November 21, 2012, I had learned that Councilman Bowen did not want to utilize e-mail and digital communications. He wanted a hard copy of the Council packet, and he wanted it delivered to his house. I advised staff that I would take his packet to him because he doesn't live far from my home. I also thought it would provide me with an opportunity to chat with him about what happened in the Council Office that day.
- On the evening of November 21, 2012, I arrived at Councilman Bowen's house to find Mrs. Bowen in an outside chair with a glass of wine awaiting Mr. Bowen's return. She was very pleasant and invited me inside. We chatted until Mr. Bowen arrived just a few moments later. When Mr. Bowen arrived, we greeted each other, I provided him his packet and digital devices. We then began addressing City business. He seemed to be flustered that I was attending to these items. I explained that we were practically neighbors, I was sorry that his arrival didn't go better and that it was my pleasure. I again apologized that it had been a tough week and that his start at the City had not met his expectations. I also advised him that if he had any problems, it would be great for him to contact Mrs. Verillo and/or me directly. I did let him know how his earlier interactions had been perceived by the office and that I wanted to see him succeed and that I was there to help him. He seemed to take this very badly and became very defensive. He stated that he wanted to work with Mrs. Yvette Cruz only not Mrs. B. Cruz (there are two unrelated Cruz's in the office). By the time, he walked me out, though cordial, I was very concerned something had gone terribly awry.
- On the morning of Thanksgiving Day, November 22, 2012, I came into the office to write a Thanksgiving message to Team Port St. Lucie. Upon my arrival, I discovered an e-mail of that same day, 6:56 a.m., from Mr. Bowen, which is attached. The e-mail cancelled two appointments, an all day tour of the City and dinner for us and our wives on Friday, November 23, and also our scheduled Monday morning regular working meeting. My concerns from the day before had been confirmed and I was very distraught. Accordingly, I sent him an e-mail at 9:32

a.m., November 22, in response. Please find it attached. I also sent him another e-mail at 12:08 p.m., ensuring that he received the Thanksgiving message, which is attached.

- I was very disconcerted over this turn of events and sought the counsel of the Mayor and Councilwoman Berger over the course of the weekend. Both said that they would see what they could do.
- I was able to meet with Mr. Bowen several times during the week of November 26, 2012. In fact, we had many positive and productive interactions. I thought we were building a quality rapport based upon all of the signals available to me.
- I met with Councilman Bowen on December 3, 2012, at the City Council Conference Room. Roger Orr, City Attorney, joined us for a portion. At the meeting, Councilman Bowen expressed his displeasure at the pace of staff's work on proposed legislation concerning synthetic drugs. He got increasingly unhappy until he had what I would characterize as an irate outburst, yelling and slamming some conference chairs.
- At the City Council meeting of December 3, 2012, I was grateful for Mr. Bowen's kind words during his City Council report and update portion of the City Council meeting. I was happy to see that there was no lingering negative energy from him being upset in the morning. The attached clip reveals his gracious compliments and demeanor. At this point, I was very optimistic that the crisis had passed. In fact, the previous anxiety that I had felt with other Councilmembers associated with my evaluation and pay increase (which I still have not received) seemed to be abating. Everything was looking good.
- During the weeks of December 3 and 10th, I spoke with Mr. Bowen on several occasions. Conversations were good and the collaboration was strong. I found him engaging. He even seemed to lobby the Mayor to change the operating procedure of being copied on every single one of my incoming e-mails due to it being "micromanaging". I distinctly remember having a meeting in my back conference room the week of the 10th, where he stated that I was a "visionary" and that he thought I was going to take the City places.
- On December 14, I stopped by the City Council Office before a meeting in my office to make the rounds. Mr. Bowen and I spoke on various topics, and he brought up the idea of what I equated to a legislative aide. He wanted to send one of his staff members to all the meetings he attended in order to take questions, notes and to provide some other functions I had difficulty understanding. The Council Office is currently staffed by an Office Manager and assistant. In my mind, I thought that since there are only two assistant-type positions and 5 members of Council, it would be difficult for all of them to have equal service if one Councilmember, who only wanted to work with one assistant, started utilizing all of her time. As a result, I inquired if we might not send our Communications Director or some other staffers depending upon the needs of the particular event he wanted covered. He brought up the Martin County MPO meeting, and I shared that I thought we already staffed it with personnel from our Engineering Division. It became apparent that I was not giving him what he wanted, and he was getting frustrated. The meeting ended with him terse and tense. Not long thereafter, the Mayor advised me that Mr. Bowen was very upset with me, and that she is scared of him when he is upset. In the afternoon of the 14th, I watched as the Mayor and Mr. Bowen opened the doors of the City Council Office conference room. As they were leaving, I heard a reference to my name and "bullshit". It was clear that they did not expect me to be standing there. However, they did not address it, and I did not put them on the spot. I could not remember the exact language, but I recollect that they were discussing the legislative aide idea.
- I spoke to the Mayor several times about this issue over the next week, at all hours of the day and night, and it began to spin out of control.
- At 5:12 p.m., Friday, December 14, 2012, Mr. Bowen sent me a memorandum regarding the MPO meeting. Please see the attached e-mail, which requests attendance by an appropriate City staff member. At 7:05 p.m., I sent the attached e-mail to Mr. Bowen advising him that someone from the Engineering Division would be in attendance.
- I heard from the Mayor on Friday and Saturday with regard to how upset Mr. Bowen was.

- On Monday, December 17, I received word from both the Mayor and Mrs. Verillo that Mr. Bowen was not happy because no one from the City had attended the MPO meeting as he had requested. Moreover, he wanted both of them to let me know that he knew that I didn't send anyone. Of course, we did send someone; and, quite frankly, I was worried. I knew he had a temper and a proclivity for writing memoranda. As a result, I was worried that he would box me in, writing me a memorandum that said we didn't send someone. If he did, I knew I would have to formally respond advising him he was wrong. I felt very strongly that such a scenario would be a disaster. He would be publicly humiliated, an event from which we would never recover. As it turns out, I believe by attempt to avoid one disaster created another one. I called him to defuse the situation. When he did not answer, I left a voicemail informing him of what happened. When he arrived at the meeting, he checked the sign in sheet. When he saw no one there, he assumed that no staff member was present. Our staff member, arrived a little late and actually sat very close to Councilman Bowen. She was going to introduce herself after the meeting. However, she was not able to because Mr. Bowen left the meeting early. As I explained this on his answering machine, it became clear that I highly offended him. In hindsight, I should not have left the voicemail; but, I didn't know what to do. He once informed me with a sense of pride that he did not speak to former City Manager Donald Cooper for 3 months during his (Mr. Bowen's) previous term on Council. Consequently, I have found this situation very perverse in that I offended him in my effort to protect him from offense and embarrassment. He was insulted that I pointed out he left early. He thought I was taking a dig. I was not trying to communicate a dig. I was trying to communicate the reason. Again, voicemail was a bad choice.
- Around this time, the Mayor was working to schedule a meeting with the City Council and Office Staff to clear the air and set office procedures. Then and over the next couple weeks, she would advise me that this meeting would address all of the problems. That it would be a good "housekeeping" meeting, but I was very concerned that it was heading for a "housecleaning" meeting. At the very least, I believed that though the meeting could be beneficial and is a common tool employed by Councils, especially newly seated ones, that this meeting would have to be an advertised public meeting under the Sunshine. Consequently, I suggested as much in an e-mail of December 18, 2012, which is attached. To my knowledge, I never received a response from Mr. Orr.
- Though it is dated December 19, 2012, on December 18, 2012, I received a memorandum from Mr. Bowen which is attached. I was shocked and dismayed by the memorandum. I had never received such a piece of correspondence in my entire life. I found it incredulous and decided to send it home for the archives. I also felt a need to share it with my main confidante, Tonia Oravec, my wife. Tonia, out of reflex, replied to my e-mail with her e-mail of December 18, 2012, 5:24 p.m. which states: "He's a jerk!" All of my e-mails at that time and still today are automatically copied to the press, Vice Mayor Bartz and Councilwoman Martin. One or more Councilpersons saw it, contacted Roger Orr and had him formally update the City Council. Though I obviously knew of my wife's e-mail, I did not know that I and this e-mail had become the subject of formal discussions between Mr. Orr and the members of the City Council.
- This situation became supercharged. I spoke to the Mayor and Councilwoman Berger that night. I could feel the tension ratcheting up. What some may consider a minor offense was being transformed into crisis.
- On December 19, 2012, we had a Special City Council meeting at Tradition Studios to tour the facility. I perceived my interactions with the City Council to be very awkward and strained at best. There was a confrontation between Councilwomen Martin and Berger in the parking lot. I have heard bits and pieces, but I did not hear the exchange personally. It was critical to be "on" for this meeting given the importance of the underlying issue (the Digital Domain bankruptcy and associated legal dispute) and the presence of the press. However, following the meeting, I was truly despondent. I didn't understand how the City Attorney and the entire City Council with the exception of Councilwoman Berger could talk about me, my wife and these happenings extensively without talking with me. I thought we had more robust relationships. I was especially

disappointed that Roger hadn't given me a heads up. Just a month or two before, I had advised him after I had been instructed to look up the cancellation provisions of his contract as a professional courtesy.

- The exact details of the remainder of the December 19 and 20 are clouded by a rumor fueled haze. I heard that Councilman Bowen was going to call for a vote of No Confidence. The Mayor was in a frenzy, ping ponging back and forth between all of the stakeholders. It was getting frothy. I then heard that he denied that rumor to the press.
- On December 20, 2012, my wife wrote an apology letter to Mr. Bowen, which is attached.
- I cleared my calendar and stayed home working on what started as a "Jerry Maguire" letter, but became the attached letter of December 21, entitled "Holiday Wish", due to the intervention of my incredible ACM Bremer and SATCM Kleman. No one but Councilwoman Berger provided a formal response.
- On December 21, 2012, I wrote an apology e-mail to the Mayor and City Council which is attached.
- On that same day, I was called by Mrs. Verillo who provided the phone to Ms. Pam Booker, Senior Assistant City Attorney, who, with great emotion in her voice, advised me that the Mayor had asked her to pull my contract because 4 of 5 Councilmembers had lost confidence in me and that the Mayor wanted to explore the severance provision. I advised her that I appreciated the call and that the Mayor should get the public document as per her request. Of course, I was crestfallen, and I had many questions; but, I continued the delivery of Holiday presents to the Department Heads, Assistant Department Heads and random employees.
- I left City Hall pretty beaten down, but happy to be going home. On my way home, I received a call from Ms. Booker, and I returned to City Hall to meet with Ms. Booker in her office for roughly two hours. During the meeting, Ms. Booker seemed to be feeling me out for how I wanted this apparent split to go. I did not want to put Ms. Booker in a position where her agency to Council could be questioned, but I wanted to know how the Mayor could know that 4 out of 5 Councilmembers could have no confidence in me outside of the Sunshine and how 4 out of 5 Councilmembers could have lost confidence in me after just providing me with a very good evaluation in the last month. I asked Ms. Booker if she had spoken to the other Councilmembers directly on this issue, and she replied "no". I felt like we were jumping the gun. Moreover, no matter what, I didn't think the City needed to see a repeat of the termination of Mr. Bentrutt.
- When I finally made it to dinner with my family a little after 9:30 p.m. on Friday, December 21, the eve of the City's Holiday Break, we did not talk about Christmas, we talked about where we would move if daddy lost his job.
- Over the long Holiday weekend, I spoke to Councilwoman Berger, who presumably was the only one of the five referenced by the Mayor who hadn't lost faith in me. She told me that Councilman Bowen had been working with Mr. Orr on a legal opinion that would put me in my place and allow City Councilmembers to direct Department Heads. She reported an exchange with Mr. Bowen in which he stated that he was trying to give her and the Council a heads up on his effort with the legal opinion. Councilwoman Berger reported that when she referenced Sunshine, Mr. Bowen stated that everyone mentions the Sunshine like it means something. No one has been tried for a Sunshine Violation since the City's incorporation in 1961, and he didn't know why she was willing to jump on grenades for Greg [me].
- On December 27, 2012, I received a memorandum outlining a legal opinion on City Charter Section 3.07, which upheld my administrative operating procedures though it took some backhanded shots at me. I had the thought that it was good that gravity still worked and held people's feet to planet Earth.
- On January 2, 2013, the New Year had begun, and it was time to see where I stood with all of the City Council. I prepared myself for the January 3 housekeeping (or housecleaning) meeting. I learned that the meeting had been cancelled. However, I did meet with the Mayor at approximately 11:30 a.m. I raised my concern over her pulling my contract for the second time in six months. She said she had to check severance provisions because the Council was not happy with me. I asked her how she knew the Council was unhappy given my evaluations and there had been no such discussions in the Sunshine. I asked what the Council was unhappy about and what

had changed since my evaluation. She did not answer the questions, got defensive and dismissed me. However, later that day and the next morning she was waiting for me with a carrot cupcake from Panera, wanting to move forward.

- Later January 2, I learned that there was a potential problem with Mr. Bowen's interaction with the Communications Department in the filming of a program known as "PSL Living". I called Mr. Bowen to resolve this issue with poor results. Please see my attached notes.
- On January 8, 2013, I sent a personal note to Councilman Bowen in attempt to bridge the divide. Please see the attached document. I had been somewhat reinvigorated by the Mayor's attempt to improve not only our direct interpersonal relationship, but those of other leaders.
- On January 9, 2013, Mr. Bowen had a meeting with the restaurateur of the Saints Golf Course. I sent ACM Bremer because of a scheduling conflict and due to the ACM's oversight of the Parks & Recreation Department and the Saints. Mr. Bowen opened the meeting with the restaurateur and my staff by criticizing my lack of response to the restaurateur. Unbeknownst to Mr. Bowen, I had responded by delegating the City's response to the restaurateur to Curtis Wichern, Golf Course Administrator, who was also the designated contract manager for the subject contract.
- On January 10, 2013, an anonymous letter was delivered to the City Council Office which blasted me and is attached.
- On January 11, 2013, Mr. Bowen sent me a memorandum requesting a written response. My response, also of January 11, 2013, is attached for your reference.
- Within a week, two more anonymous letters had shown up, one of which had a date of January 9 (before the first one). They are also attached.
- Despite all of this drama, the good work of the people still required attention. One of our priorities had been , and is, the hiring of an Economic Development Manager. We had found a good candidate in Rebecca Miller, and SATCM Kleman was working on the details. Sadly, she started getting skittish because she had heard that the City's organization was politically unstable. More directly, according to conversations she had with Mr. Kleman, HR Director Susan Williams and later me, she had heard that I was on my way out. I spoke to her directly about this on January 14, 2013 at approximately 10:30 a.m. During this conversation, she stated that she had received a call from a male who she would not identify that "4 out of 5 commissioners were gunning you [me] down and trying to do it in a way that wasn't in the public record". As a result, she had to "pull back and reevaluate". In a conversation with Susan Williams, Ms. Miller reportedly stated that the male was not a City Councilmember, but he was "high up enough in the food chain to know". During a conversation with Communications Director Ed Cunningham on this and related matters, I learned that St. Lucie County Commissioner Todd Mowery approached Mr. Cunningham at the Gatlin Super Wal*Mart, stating in Ed's words: "What's going on down there. I heard Greg has lost the confidence of 4 out of 5 Councilmembers." The rumors had left the cocoon and venomous boogeymen were impacting my ability to carry out my duties and my credibility with other governmental organizations.
- On January 16, 2013, Mr. Bowen's assistant cancelled all of our meetings until further notice.
- On January 17, 2013, Mr. Bowen attempted to schedule a meeting between the City (him and I believe the Mayor ended up attending) and the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce. As for a representative of the administration, Mr. Bowen's assistant relayed to Mrs. Verillo that he wanted SATCM Kleman, ACM Bremer in his absence and if neither of them were available me.
- On January 22, 2013, the City Council tested a new to the current Council workshop meeting format. Just prior to the meeting, Mrs. Y. Cruz asked the Police Department for respond to an extensive request for information relating to the Rosser Road Substation within a half hour, which took significant resources of the Department, without giving me a heads up even though she is normally very diligent about it. Moreover, most of the requested information had already been provided to Mr. Bowen when I previously provided him with the Police

Department Reorganization memorandum of April 10, 2012, which he stated he had reviewed and was supportive thereof. In contrast to being supportive, Mr. Bowen was critical of the subject for the first hour of the Workshop. On January 25, 2013, I discussed this matter with Mrs. Y. Cruz and her newly designated Supervisor, Karen Phillips, City Clerk, advising Mrs. Y. Cruz to keep me in the loop on such requests.

- Later in the afternoon on January 22, 2013, there was a Special City Council Meeting. The start of the meeting was delayed due to arguments between Councilmembers and Councilmembers criticizing staff over the manner of announcement, and the substance of the announcement, of Bass Pro Shops' interest in opening a Port St. Lucie Store. The arguments happened at and from the dais in the City Council Chambers, in front of an audience and delayed the start of the City Council meeting approximately 26 minutes. During the course of these arguments, I advised the City Council that I thought they should avoid having such discussions off the record at least twice. This meeting was followed by additional dramatic events unfolding across the City Hall which caused a spectacle noticed by employees. This event was the most embarrassing professional situation with which I have ever been associated.
- On January 23, 2013, I drafted the attached letter to City Council. I found it very cathartic, but I ended up changing the date to March 9 because I wanted to wait (if I could) until my 1 year anniversary.
- On January 23, I updated the City Council on an economic development prospect for our City Center Project. I called all members of the City Council, including Mr. Bowen. I reached Mr. Bowen at approximately 8 p.m. in the evening. When I called, his answering machine picked up, but I could tell that someone had picked up the receiver also. I waited for the outgoing message to stop, and a brief conversation ensued. My recollection of that conversation is as follows:

Good evening, Mr. Bowen. It is Greg Oravec.

Mr. Bowen replied Good evening, sir.

Sir, based upon yesterday's discussion, I would like to make sure that the City Council is aware of all economic development prospects. May I provide you with an update.

Mr. Bowen stated I just got home from work a half hour ago, I'm just eating dinner. Unless this is an emergency I will call you back later.

No sir, this is not an emergency, but I think you would like this update.

Good night, sir...[click]...

- Soon after the phone call, I sent a follow up e-mail to Mr. Bowen which is attached.
- On January 24, 2013, in response to a newspaper article provided to me by Mrs. Y. Cruz, I sent the attached e-mail to Mr. Bowen which also referenced the phone call of January 23.
- On January 29, 2013, Mr. Bowen asked Mrs. Verillo for a copy of my contract, resume and an update on the hiring of the Economic Development Manager because I had not provided such an update during the City Manager's Report at the City Council meeting of January 28.
- On January 29, I shared my letter dated March 9 with both Councilwoman Berger and Councilwoman Martin in separate meetings. Those individual meetings were part of our recurring update meetings which I have with each Councilmember other than Mr. Bowen who cancelled them.
- In response, I provided the attached memorandum of January 29, 2013.
- On January 31, 2013, Mr. Bowen sent me the attached memorandum, which personally attacks me. He followed that memorandum with the attached "Corrected Copy" which inserted a paragraph and corrected some typographical errors. In response, I asked several people for advice and counsel, as I have never dealt with such a situation and am perplexed as to how to properly respond and move forward. My outreach extended to the Mayor and City Council. The Mayor responded verbally the same day. She relayed that she spoke to three people in leadership who stated that I have to turn the other cheek and accept it because that is what comes with the job. Today, Councilwoman Martin stopped by to see me. She was very concerned and seemed to care.

However, the first concern specifically expressed was questioning why I sent it to others via e-mail which will "get it out" to others. This afternoon, Councilwoman Berger sent the attached e-mail.

- Today, Mrs. Verillo was informed by Mr. Bowen, or his office, that I was to send the "Corrected Copy" of his memorandum to everyone I sent the original to. If I refused to do so, I was to advise him in writing for the reasons. This suggested to me that he is more concerned about the typographical errors in his personal attack than he is about the fact that he launched a personal attack. I wonder if he recognizes that he is doing the very things of which he falsely accuses me? It is almost more than I can bear to see him call me a coward and then go on to define a coward as someone "who makes a mistake, doesn't admit it..." Did he not see my earlier memorandum of the same day in which I stated that "I feel I missed that opportunity...[and] I have to own that"? The following is part of my mantra: No one is perfect. We all make mistakes. Own them. Learn from them. Be better because of them. Don't repeat them. I practice what I preach.
- I am at a loss how to properly respond to these circumstances. To me, this latest attack is just the latest occurrence in a long string of inappropriate behavior. I understand that an employee cannot discipline an employer, but how can this behavior be consistent with the City Council Rules and the form of government that was intended by our charter and, more importantly, our citizens. I love the City of Port St. Lucie much more than I need my job as City Manager. I want to do what is best for the City, leaves my honor intact, demonstrates to my Team and our citizens that I did not quit, but that no employee should have to tolerate this type of treatment from an employer, even if the employer is a group of elected officials.